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A Century Sermon delivered in Hopkinton on Lord's Day, December 24, 1815. By Rev. Nathaniel Howe, A. M. Pastor of the Church. 2. Peter i. 13. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance." Andover, Flagg and Gould. 1816.

THERE are few things more precious, because more rare, than that kind of simplicity, which the French call *naïveté*; and which either unconscious or fearless of the power of of ridicule, displays its feelings and opinions with frankness and truth. The imitation of it, is sometimes attempted by skillful writers, but the reality can seldom be met with. The social intercourse of nations is so rapid and universal, education is so similar, and fashion so general, that we are yearly becoming more alike, and, while we acquire higher polish and refinement, lose under the friction of the world all the distinctive, rude characteristicks of different localities. The fine polished marbles and granites may please the eye of the common observer, but the mineralogist is more delighted with the rough fragment, whose sharp edges and untouched surface discover its peculiarities. It has been our lot to read more polished sermons than the present, but never one half so abounding in plainness and originality. It is a *unique* specimen, and beyond all price. That it should have been delivered is remarkable—that it should have been printed still more so; particularly as it was printed by request and dedicated to the parish, with affectionate wishes for their "peace, prosperity and eternal happiness." The text taken for the motto in the title page, which is not that of the discourse, is admirably chosen. We shall make some extracts, but almost every page of it will reward a perusal.

The following gives some account of "*Squire Hopkins*" and of the origin of the town.

"There was formerly a man living in the kingdom of Great Britain, whose name was Edward Hopkins. This man was *not* one of those ignorant, selfish, narrow-contracted souls, who could think of nothing but himself, his family, and

friends. He could think of America; an infant country, though it was three thousand miles distant. He could think of the benefits of education. His enlarged mind took into view the difficulties of educating youth, in an infant country, to fill important stations in Church and State.

"In the year 1636, the General Court granted four hundred pounds to erect a College within the Commonwealth. In the next year they voted that the College should be erected in that part of Newtown, which is now called Cambridge. The year following they decreed that the College should be called Harvard College, in honour of the Rev. John Harvard, who had bequeathed his library, and upward of seven hundred pounds for the benefit of the College.

"In the year 1642, the General Court established a board of Overseers. In 1650, the Charter of the Corporation was granted. And in the year 1657, Edward Hopkins Esq. made his will.

"The Father of Spirits had not only endowed 'Squire Hopkins with an enlarged mind, but he had given him a great estate; and what was of vastly more importance, he had given him a benevolent heart.

"'Squire Hopkins was a man of great wealth; his estate was estimated at twenty thousand pounds sterling; equal in value to \$88888,88. Eight hundred pounds sterling of this property was given to be laid out in lands, three fourths for the benefit of the College, and one fourth for the benefit of the Grammar School in Cambridge. That is to say, \$2666,66 were given to the College, and \$888,88 to the Grammar School in Cambridge. This was given "for the breeding up of youth in the way of learning for the publick service of the country in future times."—"For the upholding and propagating of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ." These are expressions taken from the will of Edward Hopkins Esq. In the year 1710, it was ordered that this money should be laid out in lands. This donation of 'Squire Hopkins to Harvard College was the money which first purchased Hopkinton, which in its original state contained what is now called Hopkinton, about three thousand acres of Upton, and five hundred acres of Holliston. The lands began to be settled between 1710, and 1712. On the 13th day of December, (Old Style, which according to

the present mode of reckoning brings it to the 24th day of December, 1715, this town was incorporated. This day, therefore, is the beginning of a new Century, to the inhabitants of this place.

“As the town was purchased by the donation of 'Squire Hopkins to Harvard College, the lands were to be leased out to tenants, at one penny sterling per acre, to be paid annually to the College to the year 1823, and three pence of like money afterwards. Twelve thousand five hundred acres were to be leased out to tenants; the residue to be common land, to be divided among the tenants to enable them the better to pay the quit rents; and moreover the tenants were to pay a province tax, for what they were worth, above the rents reserved.”

After giving an account of his predecessors in the ministry, and the principal events that happened in the town, he comes to his own settlement among them. It was agreed that he should be paid two hundred pounds, receive seventy pounds salary, and the occupation of the glebe, or, as he terms it, “the improvement, of the ministerial land.” Some difficulties occurred in the payment of this salary, which were however surmounted and the author struggled on with it for fifteen years, when he applied to the town to increase his salary \$116,67. The application was unsuccessful, and after relating all the particulars of it, he makes the following remarks :

“The reason of my fixing on that sum, and not being willing to accept of less, was because a less sum would do me no good. If I had an addition to my salary, I must pay more attention to the ministry; and if not, I must continue to supply the wants of my family by the labour of my hands. It was plain the town were unwilling to make that addition, although it was only one half of what justice and equity required them to do; and it has always afforded me pleasure, to think I had opportunity to show, I did not value an hundred dollars, as much as the people generally did an hundred cents: for but few would have had more than one dollar annually to have paid, above the nominal sum, to have furnished me with as much as I needed. Some have supposed that the town did nothing that day, because they granted no money; but in this they were greatly de-

ceived ; for they convinced me, I could place no dependence on their justice and equity ; and that I must take care of myself, or perish. This opened my eyes in every direction, and employed my hands every day.

“As it has been frequently said, that the town would have done something handsome, had I not stipulated the sum which they must grant, or nothing, they have had reason since to think, that in this also they were greatly deceived ; for when the town had a meeting the next year, through the instrumentality of Deacon Fiske, to show their benevolence, and their regard to justice and equity, there was a tie ;—the moderator, the late Col. Eames, could not determine the vote : the meeting was adjourned for two weeks, and at that time there was a handsome majority in favour of doing nothing.

“You are sensible, that my health has sometimes been poor, and my mind greatly depressed : poverty has stared me in the face.

“My brethren, may I ask a question, a plain, simple question ? How shall I obtain your consent ? Shall I take silence for consent ? Your countenances discover a willingness.

“The question is this : Do you know by what means I have become *so rich*, as to have a great house, finished and furnished ; a farm, a herd of cattle, a flock of sheep, horses, and money at interest ? I say nothing about my debts to day.

“Shall I answer the question ?—The principal reason is this : because I have been doing *your business*, and neglecting *my own*.—What is your business ?—Your business is to support your minister ; and that is what I have been doing, for more than twenty years. And what is *my business* ?—My business is to study, and preach ; and in this I have never abounded. It is true, I have been absent from publick worship, not more than four or five Sabbaths, for twenty five years ; but I have frequently been present, and attempted to preach, when it has been mortifying to me, and could not have been edifying to you. I have sometimes administered reproof, both to the Church and the society, in a manner that has been thought to discover some degree of severity ; but in these cases you have always had good sense enough to know, you richly deserved it.”

The items of the Reverend author's creed will account for this discourse having received its *imprimatur* at Andover.

"My object in preaching has been to explain, defend, and enforce, what have appeared to me the true doctrines of the gospel, *God's decrees*; for it must be glad tidings of great joy to all people, that God governs the world;—that his government is not only perfect, but universal, and lays the only solid foundation for foreknowledge; for nothing can be *certainly foreknown*, that is not fixed in the Divine Decree.

"The divinity of Christ:—this lays the only solid foundation for the sufficiency of the atonement made for all mankind.

"The doctrine of personal election from eternity to everlasting life, as the only doctrine that makes it absolutely certain, that any of our sinful race will be saved.

"The doctrine of total depravity, as laying the only solid foundation for regeneration.

"Regeneration by the agency of the Spirit of God, as laying the foundation for all holy exercises in the hearts of men.

"Justification by faith alone, which is the same thing as Divine forgiveness.

"The certain and final perseverance of the saints, 'through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;' the eternity of hell torments, and the duties of morality. I have always believed and always preached, that a good life is the best evidence of a good heart."

These extracts will be sufficient to prove that this is no ordinary discourse. It contains many historical details relating to the town of Hopkinton, that make it valuable. The kind of tenure by which lands were originally held in that town, is nearly a solitary instance in the State of Massachusetts, where almost all real estate is possessed in fee simple. The mean, oppressive and impolitick course of half-starving a clergyman, is shewn in a forcible though homely manner; and though there may not be magnanimity enough in the village of Hopkinton to profit by this *stirring up* of their pastor, we should think it might produce good effect in other places.